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ABSTRACT

Evaluation of the sixth and final year of operation for a preplacement program for 13 severely multiply handicapped deaf blind children, located in the Industrial Home for the Blind, is reported. The program is explained to prepare students for entrance into their existing special education programs. Qualitative findings on the physical setting, equipment, supplies, activities, staff, and transportation are presented. Quantitative findings focus on pupil achievement (criteria were achieved in mobility and self help skills but not in communication, social, or psychomotor-perceptual skills) and parent involvement (all of the parents were involved in the program through school visits, attendance at meetings, telephone contacts, or rehabilitation conferences). Recommendations are offered for program improvement. (CL)

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PRE-PLACEMENT PROGRAM
FOR SEVERELY MULTI-HANDICAPPED
DEAF-BLIND CHILDREN

1980-81

OEE Evaluation Report

EC 160 492

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FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

E.S.E.A. Title VI-C and
the Industrial Home for the Blind

5001-62-12901

PRE-PLACEMENT PROGRAM
FOR SEVERELY MULTI-HANDICAPPED
DEAF-BLIND CHILDREN

1980-81

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INTRODUCTION

This report is an evaluation of the sixth year of operation of the Pre-Placement Program for Severely Multi-Handicapped Deaf-Blind Children, (hereafter referred to as Pre-Placement) which was designed to prepare handicapped children for acceptance into other existing and projected special education programs. The target population consisted of children with congenital or acquired combinations of anomalies in addition to blindness, such as severe hearing loss, muscle dysfunction, or other physical and mental deficits.

The program was located in the Industrial Home for the Blind (I.H.B.) at 57 Willoughby Street, Brooklyn, New York and served a total of 13 children, aged four to twelve years, from throughout the city. Funding for the program came from several sources: the Division of Special Education (D.S.E.) of the New York City Public Schools; Title VI-C; and I.H.B., each of which provided staff, services, and/or equipment for a coordinated program of evaluation, instruction, social services, placement, staff training, and parent education.

Both quantitative data on pupil achievement and parent involvement, and qualitative data on program implementation were gathered for this evaluation by a consultant from the Office of Educational Evaluation (O.E.E.) who visited the program several times during the school year.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Physical Setting, Equipment, and Supplies

The Pre-Placement program continued to be housed in the I.H.B. which provided a large open area, three classrooms, a bathroom, and a kitchen;

all of the spaces were accessible to children in wheelchairs. Classrooms were attractively arranged with materials readily available. Special orthopedic equipment such as parapodiums, mats, and walkers, as well as instructional materials and hygiene supplies, were all adequately provided this year though a special $6,000 allocation.

The O.E.E. evaluator noted that since the children spend a great deal of time on the floor, new carpeting would have made them more comfortable. The existing carpeting was worn and badly stained.

Activities and Staff

The instructional component of the program included training in self-help, communication, visual, psychomotor, social, mobility, and motor skills. Children were divided into two groups according to their level of functioning, with the higher functioning group participating in additional fine-motor and cognitive activities. Self-help training in feeding, dressing, and toileting was provided as needed and all of the children received individual language and motor education training.

In addition, through an affiliation with the Lamm Institute at Long Island College Hospital, bimonthly physical- and occupational-therapy evaluations and treatment plans were provided.

The on-site staff included two teachers, two educational assistants, a language therapist, motor education teacher, and a part-time social worker. In addition, high school students and trainees funded through the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act assisted.

Transportation

There were many complaints by staff regarding busing. In particular, children who required wheelchairs usually arrived well after the program day began and left a half-hour early, disrupting the scheduled activities.

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

The program was designed to accomplish two objectives: one for the students and one for parents. The following sections present the objectives, evaluation procedures, and findings.

Pupil Achievement

Individualized instructional objectives and pupil growth were determined through administration of the Callier-Azusa scale*, a five-point rating scale developed for the assessment of multihandicapped children on a wide range of behaviors. The proposal objective stated that 80 percent of the target population would master at least one additional skill in each of the following areas: communication skills, vision training, psychomotor and perceptual training, social development, ambulation, self-dependance, and awareness of self and others. Data were available for 11 of the 13 children in the program; the remaining students attended the program for less than two months. Students were assessed in five of the seven proposed areas and the findings were as follows: the criterion was achieved in mobility and self-help skills, with nine out of eleven, or 81 percent, of the students mastering at least one new skill in each area;

*Stillman, R. The Callier-Azusa scale. Dallas: The Univeristy of Texas at Dallas, 1976.

the criterion was not achieved in communication, social, or psychomotor-perceptual skills with eight (72 percent), seven (63 percent), and six (54 percent) students, respectively, learning at least one new skill in these areas.

Parent Involvement

The second objective proposed that at least 80 percent of the parents of participating students would be involved in their children's education and rehabilitation. Parents could participate in a number of ways: school visits, attendance at meetings, telephone contacts, and rehabilitation conferences. Analysis of program logs showed that all of the parents were involved in the program through at least one of these and most participated in several ways. For example, parents of all 13 children (100 percent) maintained telephone contact with the program; parents of 11 students (84 percent) took part in rehabilitation conferences; parents of eight students (61 percent) attended meetings; and four parents (30 percent) visited the school.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Pre-Placement program provided needed services to thirteen multihandicapped students and their parents in preparation for eventual placement in other D.S.E. programs. The program's parental involvement goal was fully attained and the pupil achievement goal was partially attained. The students who participated were severely impaired; they progressed slowly and required constant reinforcement to master new skills. Instruction by well-trained and concerned staff, as well as a high degree

of communication between the school and the parents contributed to student growth.

The 1980-81 program showed improvement over the previous year's in a number of areas:

-- the purchase of appropriate and adequate furniture and equipment;

-- the provision of physical and occupational therapy services; and

-- more systematic data collection procedures.

In one area, however, a recommendation from the previous year's report was not met: bus service remained poor and late arrivals were frequent.

The following recommendations are offered for the further improvement of this important program:

-- the program should attempt to replace the carpeting and upgrade maintenance;

-- support for parental involvement should continue;

-- attention should be given to improving the transportation service.